



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to keep Americans connected to broadband and phone service during the novel coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that all Americans maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

At the outset, I want to thank Congress for its swift action passing the CARES Act. Since its passage, the Commission established a \$200 million COVID-19 Telehealth Program to help health care providers deliver connected care services to patients at their homes or mobile locations in response to the pandemic. To date, the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program has approved funding for 305 health care providers in 42 states plus Washington, D.C. for a total of \$104.98 million in funding.

Additionally, the Commission and the Department of Education are working together to promote the use of \$16 billion in funding from the CARES Act's Education Stabilization Fund for remote learning. This collaborative effort is multi-faceted and requires strategic planning as the Commission works with agencies, governors, states, and local school districts as they leverage funding to best help students learning from home during COVID-19. And the Commission has partnered with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to promote the use of \$50 million in funding from the CARES Act to help address digital connectivity during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our respective organizations will share information on the availability of broadband and on the connectivity needs of libraries and Tribal organizations, including in rural areas, and work together to ensure that libraries across the country are aware that community use of Wi-Fi networks supported by the FCC's E-Rate program is permitted during COVID-19-related library closures. I look forward to FCC staff working with the Department of Education and IMLS to ensure that schools and libraries know about these opportunities and how they can help bridge the digital divide.

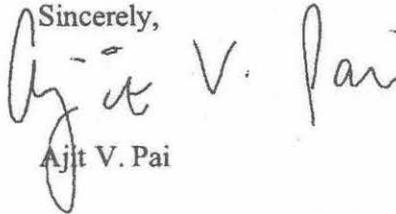
As you note in your letter, I challenged broadband and telephone service providers to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge—a voluntary commitment not to terminate service for inability to pay, to waive any late fees, and to open Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them. I'm proud of the fact that over 780 broadband and telephone service providers across the country, including all of our nation's largest providers, have taken the Pledge and thus agreed to take these concrete steps to help Americans stay connected. Many of these same companies have gone above and beyond the Pledge and taken additional steps to maintain or expand connectivity during the pandemic and agreed to extend their Pledge and additional

offerings to consumers through June 30, 2020. A list of companies going above and beyond the pledge and detail about the additional steps that they are taking are available at <https://www.fcc.gov/companies-pledging-keep-americans-connected-during-pandemic-go-above-and-beyond-call>. I thank them for stepping up to the plate once again during this unprecedented national emergency.

Finally, I appreciate the suggestion that we work with these companies on a hotspot coverage map. As you may know, a new, industry-wide hotspot coverage map would likely take months in order to implement. Moreover, the Commission does not have funding to implement such new maps, particularly given that we still don't have funding to implement the Broadband DATA Act, which also bars us from tasking the Universal Service Administrative Company to do this work. (It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the \$65 million that is needed to cover start-up costs and to implement the Broadband DATA Act for roughly one year.) However, hotspot coverage maps may be found on the websites of providers that have opened up those points of access to all Americans.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



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The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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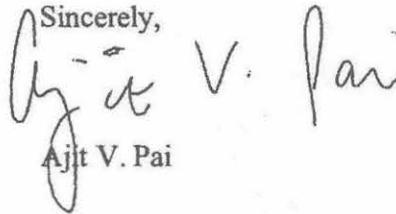
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Ajit V. Pai